Social Work Practice for LGBTQ and Gender-Variant Youth Manual:

Skills for reducing barriers to permanency for LGBTQ and gender-variant youth in foster care

Social Work Practice for LGBTQ and Gender-Variant Youth Training Manual

Skills for reducing barriers to permanency for LGBTQ and gender-variant youth in foster care

Introduction

What is RISE?
- In September 2010, the Los Angeles LGBT Center received a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The grant funds the development and testing of a model program **to address barriers to permanency and well-being for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in foster care.**
- The RISE Initiative aims to contribute to the understanding of how **to reduce the number of LGBTQ youth in long-term foster care and how to increase permanency through decreasing heterosexism, anti-gay and anti-transgender bias in caregiving settings**. We strive to provide parents, caregivers and professionals with the support and education needed to nurture durable, lifelong connections for LGBTQ young people.
- In collaboration with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and over 25 community and foster care partners, the RISE Initiative will develop, implement, and research the effects of a comprehensive multi-component intervention to help LGBTQ youth in Los Angeles County find durable **family connections, achieve emotional permanency, and obtain legal permanency in homes where they feel safe, nurtured, and loved into adulthood.**

Outreach and Relationship Building Curricula:

The Outreach and Relationship Building (ORB) Team is the RISE project intervention focused on building practitioner competency to reduce barriers in caregiving settings by decreasing heterosexism, anti-gay and anti-transgender bias. The ORB curriculum consists of two trainings (LGBTQ Foundation and Social Work Practice, respectively). The LGBTQ Foundation training provides basic knowledge about terminology and concepts related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; the coming out process; the impact of accepting and rejecting behaviors; the positive power of affirming environments; and the legal and professional standards guiding work with LGBTQ youth. The Social Work Practice training consists of five units and provides practitioners with opportunities to combine the knowledge acquired in the LGBTQ Foundation training with common practice skills, such as active listening, motivational interviewing, assessing environments and responding to specific instances of biases. Participants must attend the LGBTQ Foundation training prior to attending the Social Work Practice training. Each training is 3-3.5 hours in length.

ORB also coordinates the RISE Coaching network, a space for service providing agencies to seek further assistance and guidance in their efforts to best serve LGBT youth in their care.

RISE Skills

The following is an overview of the specific skills the Social Work Training addresses:

Unit/Title	Learning/Behavioral Objective
Unit 6: Skill Building	- Review active listening, motivational interviewing, and self-awareness checks as dynamic tools for working with LGBTQ youth
Unit 7: Language in Practice	- Understand the impact of language and youth self-definition 　o Revisit gender identity and increase comfort with pronoun usage
Unit 8: Rejection/Acceptance in Practice	- Identify supports for a youth's coming-out process and the environment's adjustment process
Unit 9: Creating a Brave Space	- Recognize behavior that truly creates an affirming environment. 　o Respond to supportive and negative comments and questions
Unit 10: Legal Framework and Professional Standards in Practice	o Review legal and professional standards regarding the disclosure of a youth's sexual orientation and/or gender identity
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Using the learning tools

Below is a list and description(s) of learning tools used in the Social Work Practice training.

Learning Tool	Function	How-To Use
Booster(s)	- Content consisting of background information to increase participant knowledge related to permanency issues for LGBTQ and gender-variant youth.	- Present boosters based on relevance to the respective unit. Boosters should move knowledge and activities forward.
Purpose statement/ Learning Objectives	- Allows a "landing point" and intended direction for guiding and monitoring learning. - Gives flexibility and guidance in adapting instructional content and delivery for diverse audiences.	- Guide facilitation of activities. - Facilitators who wish to replace activities in this curriculum with different activities can do so while still meeting intended learning purposes.
Activity/ Discussions	- Allow hands-on practice with skill.	- See "Activity Description" for guidance on delivering an activity.
Materials/Handouts	- Provide participants with information to review independently.	- Distribute as it relates to training content or provide a packet before or after training.
Unit Duration, Structure, Delivery	- Provides recommended length, sequencing, and delivery of unit content.	- Duration: Pacing - Structure: Review the sequencing of slides and activities - Delivery: Provides guidance for content delivery. - Provides key points to address and/or action steps facilitator should complete.
Key Points/Action Steps	- Provide recommended delivery of content.	- Provide facilitator with how-to deliver the content.
My Next Steps	- Allow space for participants to reflect on learning.	- Follow activity using discussion prompts in My Next Steps section.
Discussion Guidelines	- Set tone and guidelines for participation and a productive learning environment.	- Delivered before training starts. - Explain that guidelines are to create a safe learning environment for discussion and participation. - The trainer must be comfortable facilitating discussions in which people have different points of view. - The listed guidelines are suggestions. The group may change, add, delete, etc.

<u>Welcome and Introduction</u>

Purpose statement: The purpose of this unit is to:
- ❑ Welcome and introduce participants to the ORB team.
- ❑ Remind participants of project outcomes and ORB function.
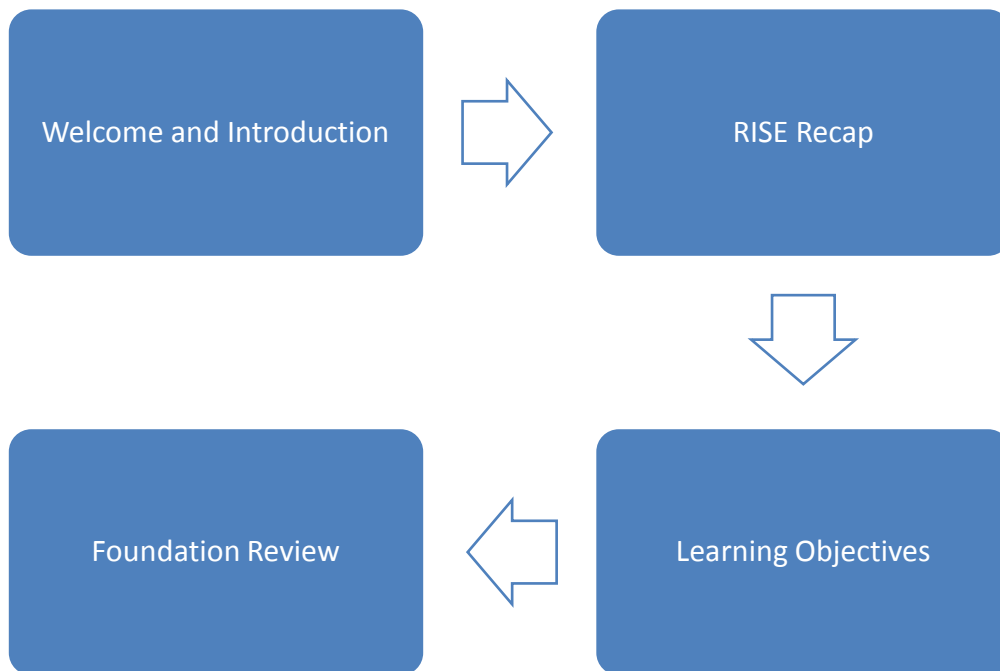- ❑ Review training purpose, format, and structure.

Learning Objectives:
>   N/A

Materials Needed:
- ❑ Welcome and Introduction Slides
- ❑ Remembering Healthy Development

Unit Structure:

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┌──────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────┐
│                      │          │                      │
│ Welcome and          │   ⇨     │   RISE Recap         │
│ Introduction         │          │                      │
│                      │          │                      │
└──────────────────────┘          └──────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────┐
│                      │          │                      │
│  Foundation Review   │   ⇦     │  Learning Objectives │
│                      │          │                      │
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Unit Duration:

Welcome and Introduction:
Function: Welcome and introduce participants to the ORB team.

Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Introduce RISE ORB team
2. Welcome participants to part two of the two-part training series.
3. Present two to three sentences of the facilitators' personal missions (Why Am I Here?).
4. Thank participants and acknowledge time given to participate in training.
5. Explain that our goal is to provide them with the knowledge and support they need to continue their work with LGBTQ youth; we are not here to change personal beliefs.
6. Address housekeeping (e.g. restrooms, cell phones, exits, breaks, snacks, etc.)
7. Inform participants about the purpose of the camera (if applicable).

Discussion Guidelines:
Function: Set tone and guidelines for productive participation during the training.

Discussion Guidelines

- I will share only if I wish…no pressure.
- I will speak from my own experience, whenever possible.
- I will value confidentiality: personal sharing will stay in the group when I leave.
- I will share comments with the general group.
- I will be open to others' thoughts and feelings even when they differ from my own.

Slide from "Creating Inclusive Systems of Care for LGBT Youth   2

Key Points/ Action Steps:
1. Have participants read the discussion guidelines
    a. This can be done silently, aloud, or the facilitator can read the guidelines to the group.
2. Ask participants if guidelines work for them, if they need any clarification or if they want to make any additions.

Question Guidelines:
1) We will answer questions directly related to the current material right away.
2) If you ask a question related to upcoming material, we will let you know when and where we will cover that information.
3) We will reserve answers to questions unrelated to the training's scope for one-on-one discussion during the breaks or after the training session.

RISE Recap
Function: Reminds participants of project outcomes and ORB function.

Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Review the following:
   - *"What does RISE stand for?"*
     - *Recognize, Intervene, Support, and Empower: Recognize that we have LGBTQ youth in our care. Intervene to combat barriers to permanency. Support LGBTQ youth in care. Empower ourselves and our colleagues to create affirming environments and provide appropriate care for LGBTQ youth to increase the likelihood that they will achieve permanency. RISE is a federally funded research project working to identify a model program for increasing permanency outcomes for LGBTQ youth in care. This is the largest grant given to any non-profit organization outside of academia or health care.*
   - *"What are RISE Project outcomes?"*
     - *Reduce the number of LGBTQ youth in long-term foster care and increase permanency through decreasing heterosexism, anti-gay and anti-transgender biases in caregiving settings.*
   - *"What is the RISE Training?*
     - *A two-part training series focused on supporting knowledge and skill for child welfare practitioner regarding the safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes for LGBTQ, gender-variant youth.*

Introduce Training

Function: Review purpose of training.

Key points/Action Steps:

1.) Explain the following:

> *"In the Foundation training, we increased our ability to recognize barriers that LGBTQ and gender-variant youth face in caregiving settings. For this training, we will practice integrating this knowledge into our practice while using tools to reduce those barriers.*

2.) Review training objectives.

Introduce Training (cont'd)
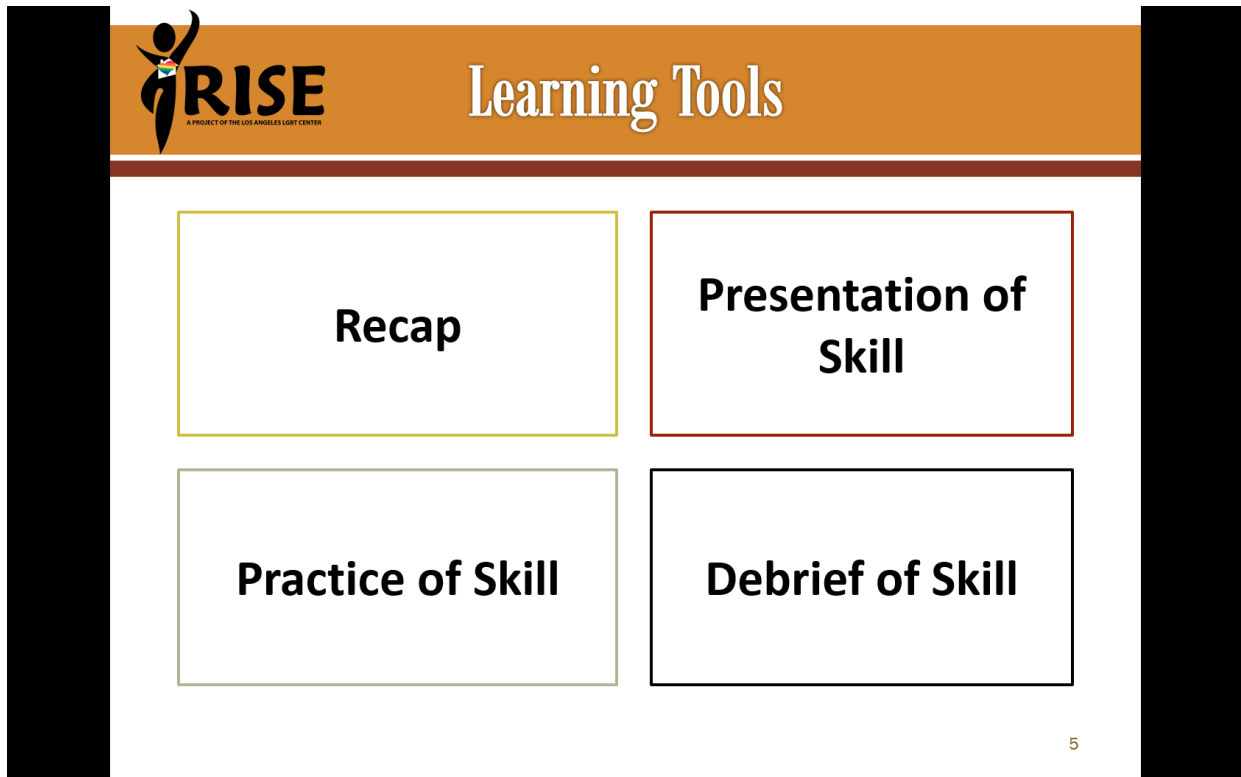
Key Point/Action Steps:

1. Introduce the learning tools and their functions in this curriculum:
   - Recap: Briefly refresh main points from the LGBTQ Foundation training. Provide applicable recaps throughout the training.
   - Presentation of Skill: A lesson on a specific skill and how to apply it to practice.
   - Practice of Skill: Activities
   - Debrief of Skill: Questions/Summary

Foundation Review

Function: Remind participants of knowledge applicable to practicing skills in the Social Work Practice training.

Key point/action steps:

1. Review highlights from the foundation training. Each picture represents an important key point:
   - *"The map represents our knowledge of the pathways to and from permanency."*
   - *"SOGIE images represent our knowledge of language."*
   - *"The Venn diagram represents the three biases that create barriers to permanency for LGBTQ youth in foster care."*
   - *"Image of Family Acceptance Project pamphlet represents our knowledge of acceptance and rejection outcomes."*
   - *"Figure with door represents our knowledge of affirming spaces."*
   - *"The four boxes represent our knowledge of managing disclosures."*

2. *Facilitator could use "True or False" format to review the following bullet point(s):*
   Language
   - *Gender expression is not an indicator of sexual orientation.*
   Barriers to permanency
   - *Heterosexism creates barriers to permanency.*

Coming out experiences
- o *There are challenges and benefits to coming out.*

Rejection and acceptance
- o *Using a youth's asserted pronoun is an example of an accepting behavior.*

Health Outcomes
- o *Rejecting behaviors have been shown to negatively impact an LGBTQ youth's coming-out process.*

Affirming spaces
- o *RISE Brave Space posters are intended to help youth feel comfortable and safe talking about their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.*

Legal framework and professional responsibilities
- o *LGBTQ youth in foster care have the same rights as non-LGBTQ youth in foster care.*

Managing disclosures
- o *When it comes to managing disclosures, youth permission is fundamental.*

3. Facilitator can also ask participants about the things that stood out, made an impact or that they remembered learning from the LGBTQ Foundation training.

4. Distribute the "Remembering Healthy Development" handout.
   - i. Revisit the LGBTQ Foundation information on basic childhood development and at what ages most youth reach developmental milestones regarding their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
   - ii. Facilitator can mention the First Crush exercise used in the Foundation Training to refresh participants' memories.
   - iii. Inform participants that this handout is an effective tool for discussing the healthy development of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation with families and youth.

Unit 6: Getting Started

Purpose statement: This unit will refresh participant knowledge of active listening, motivational interviewing, and self-awareness checks. We will also highlight the ways that these skills support our work with LGBTQ youth and their families.
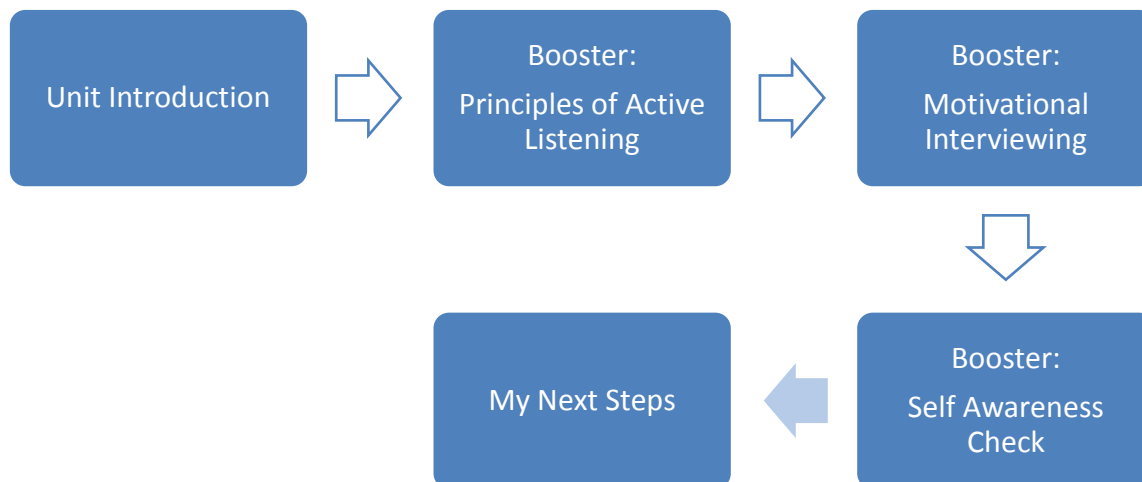
Learning Objectives:

> Review active listening, motivational interviewing and self-awareness checks as dynamic tools for working with LGBTQ youth.

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Unit 6 Slides
- ☐ Motivational Interviewing
- ☐ My Next Steps

Unit Structure:

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│                  │      │     Booster:     │      │     Booster:     │
│ Unit Introduction│  ⇒   │ Principles of    │  ⇒   │  Motivational    │
│                  │      │ Active Listening │      │  Interviewing    │
└──────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
                                                              ⇓
┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│                  │      │     Booster:     │
│  My Next Steps   │  ⇐   │  Self Awareness  │
│                  │      │      Check       │
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Unit Duration:

Unit Introduction

Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present the purpose of this unit to the participants:

    This unit will refresh our knowledge of skills necessary for rapport-building with LGBTQ youth (active listening, motivational interviewing, and self-awareness checks). When staff use these skills, LGBTQ youth may feel safer asking for support, help and resources.

2. **Learning Objectives**: Review active listening, motivational interviewing and self-awareness checks as dynamic tools for working with LGBTQ youth.

Activity/ Discussion: Who Do You Call?
Function: Have participants reflect on what makes a good listener and what qualities can hinder open conversations. This activity will lead into the unit on active listening, self-awareness and motivational interviewing.

Key Points/ Action Steps:

Option to present (limit to 5-10 min):

1) Ask participants to work in pairs and respond to the question in the green box. (2 minutes)
2) Ask participants to work in pairs and respond to the question in the red box. (2 minutes)
3) In large group, ask for three examples of key characteristics of a friend they **would** call when they need someone to listen.
4) In large group, ask for three examples of key characteristics of friend they **would not** call when they need someone to listen.
5) Recap the positive characteristics discussed as *"active listening skills we bring to our work."*

Booster: Principles of Active Listening
Function: Review the seven key principles of active listening and their relevant application in working with LGBTQ youth and gender-variant children.

Key Point/Action Steps:

Define each principle and provide a definition. Link active listening back to permanency by asking participants the following: "*Why do you think active listening is so important when working with LGBTQ youth specifically?*"

1. Review: restating, encouragers, probing
   - Restating - Paraphrasing what you heard in your own words
   - Encouragers - Brief, positive prompts to keep the conversation going and show you are listening
   - Probing - Ask professional questions to draw the person out and get deeper and more meaningful information; not for the purposes of satisfying personal curiosity
2. Remind participants that these key principles can help:
   - Build rapport
   - Create safe space
   - Open dialogue
   - Capture information for accurate reporting, documentation and case management

Booster: Principles of Active Listening (cont'd)

Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Review: silence, validation, redirection, reflecting
   - Silence - Allow for comfortable silences to avoid dominating the exchange. These silence give youth time for thoughtfulness and reflection.
   - Validation - Recognize the worthiness and legitimacy of statements, issues, and feelings.
   - Redirection - If the youth is showing signs of becoming overly angry or aggressive, shift the discussion to another topic and return to the original topic when the youth is calmer.
   - Reflecting – Reflect the youth's feelings back to them. This is different from paraphrasing, or repeating, their words.

Booster: Motivational Interviewing

Function: Review motivational interviewing and its tools. Discuss how to apply motivational interviewing to work with LGBTQ and gender-variant children.

Adapted from: Miller, W. R. & Rollnick, S. (2002). Motivational interviewing: Preparing people for change (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press
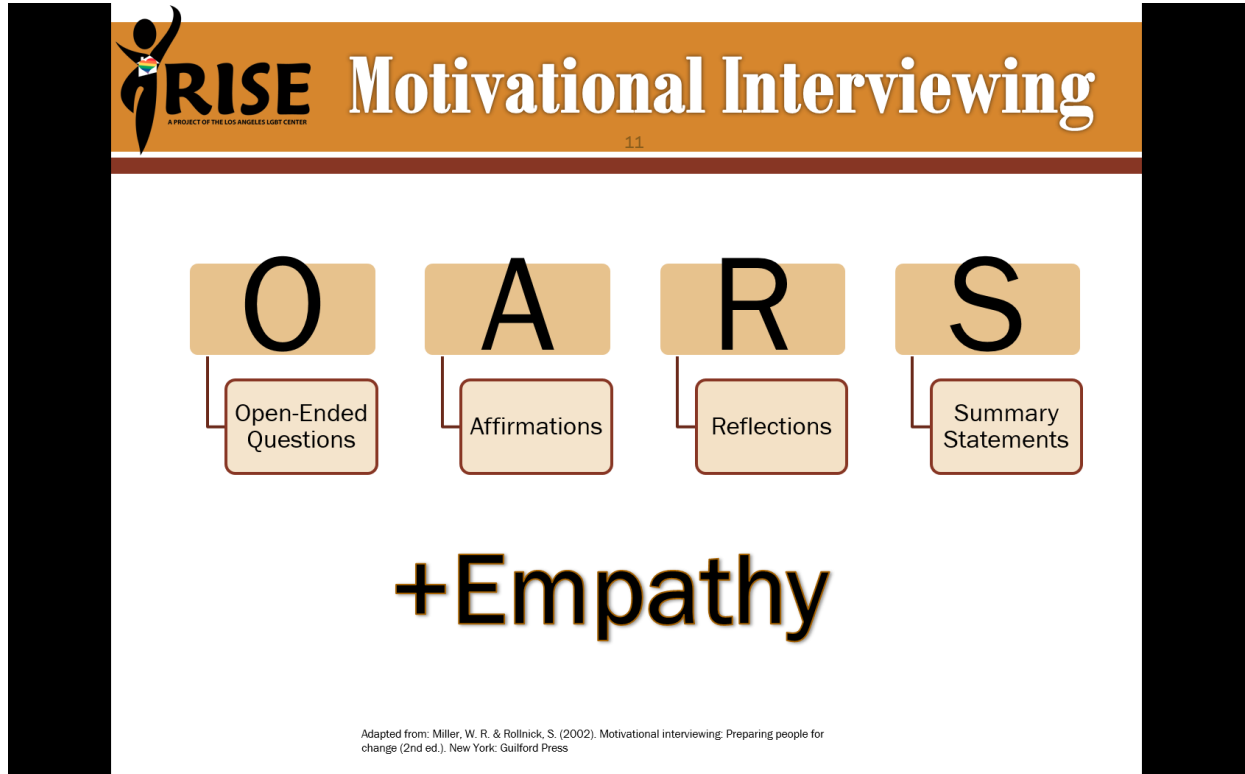
Key Points/Action Steps:
1. **Motivational Interviewing**: Motivational interviewing is a goal-oriented, client-centered counseling style that assists clients in accomplishing self-motivated changes to achieve their desired outcomes.
2. Distribute Motivational Interviewing handout.
3. Present the four key principles of motivational interviewing.
   - Express Empathy - Use words and actions that convey understanding of what the client is presenting.
   - Develop Discrepancy –Help clients see and understand any contradiction between their stated goals and their current behavior.
   - Roll with Resistance – Do not react when clients resist change. Go with the resistance to understand where it is coming from. Meet youth where they are.
   - Support Self-Efficacy – In motivational interviewing, decision-making is client-centered. Support clients as they identify the skills and abilities they have to successfully meet their goals. Honors clients by recognize that they are "experts on themselves."

Example to present:
A youth who has recently come out, tells you that he wants to have a better relationship with his biological mom. He decides to call her at least once a week.

- *Express empathy: It can be hard to repair a relationship.*
- *Develop Discrepancy: You mentioned that you want to have a stronger relationship with your bio mom, but you have not followed through on your weekly calls to her.*
- *Roll with Resistance: I can see that it is really difficult to make the weekly calls to your mom, that's ok. Can we revisit this goal again when you are ready?*
- *Support Self-Efficacy: It took a lot of courage for you to make that phone call a couple of weeks ago.*

4. **OARS:** Define terms and provide participants with an example of how to use each skill in conversations related to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression:
   - **Open Ended Questions**
   - **Affirmations**
   - **Summary Statements**
   - **Reflections**

Example to present:
Continue the example given above during the discussion of motivational interviewing.

O – Why is strengthening the relationship with your mom important to you?
A – It is great that you want to have a better relationship with your mom!
R – It sounds like it really upsets you when she doesn't call you back.
S – It sounds like if you have more conversations with your mom, you will have a stronger relationship with her. .

+Practice empathy at each step in this process.

Booster: Self-Awareness Check

Function: To explain how self-awareness can positively impact rapport building by identifying the supports a practitioner may need in their work with LGBTQ Youth.

Key points/Action Steps:

    a. Explain to participants that self-awareness checks allow social workers to assess how their non-verbal communication, past experiences, and personal biases can affect relationship and rapport building with youth.

        - *LGBTQ youth in care can be hyper-vigilant when searching their surroundings for signs that they are safe. Your non-verbal communication can convey whether you are a supportive person, and can either help or harm your relationship with the youth.*

    b. Present the three key areas to explore when conducting a self-awareness check (and the corresponding "check questions"):

        - **Non-verbal communication**
            o "What words and body language do we bring to the conversation?"
            o "How can you communicate that you are present and engaged?"
        - **Past personal and professional experiences**
            o "What past experiences may or may not influence the current interaction?"
        - **Familiarity (or lack thereof) with LGBTQ issues**
            o "What challenges might we have discussing a young person's LGBTQ identity, gender variance, and/or sexual orientation?"

   2. Ask the following questions to participants:

- *"What non-verbal communication do I bring to the conversation?"*
- *"What past experiences may or may not influence our current interaction?"*
- *"What challenges might we have discussing a young person's LGBTQ identity, gender variance and/or sexual orientation?"*

Self-Awareness Check (cont'd)

Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present the check list to participants.
2. Find an encouraging space to:
    - Express feelings.
    - Explore underlying beliefs and attitudes.
    - Practice affirming and supportive behaviors.
    - Seek more information.
    - Have future discussions.
3. Ask participants if they have a space like this in their agency. Explain the importance of having a space to have these continued conversations.

My Next Steps
Function: Reflect upon feelings and thoughts regarding the unit content and activities.

Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Introduce My Next Steps worksheet and ask participants to answer the question under the appropriate section on their handouts.
2. Social work practice is all about putting knowledge into action. Encourage participants to consider what they might do differently as a result of what they learned in this unit.
3.   When participants are finished, request that a few people share their answers.

Unit 7: Language in Practice

Purpose statement: This unit will increase our skill in using language to impact our work with LGBTQ Youth.

Learning Objectives:
- Understand the impact of language and importance of youth's self-definition
- Revisit gender identity and increase comfort with pronoun usage

Materials Needed:
- ☐ Unit 7 Slides
- ☐ My Next Steps
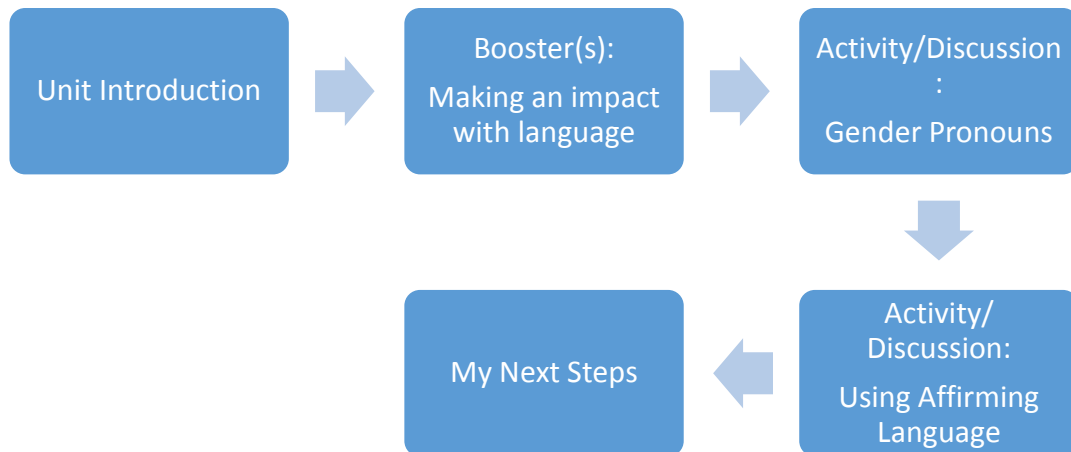
Unit Structure:

Unit Duration:

Unit Introduction:
Function: Present the Unit Purpose.
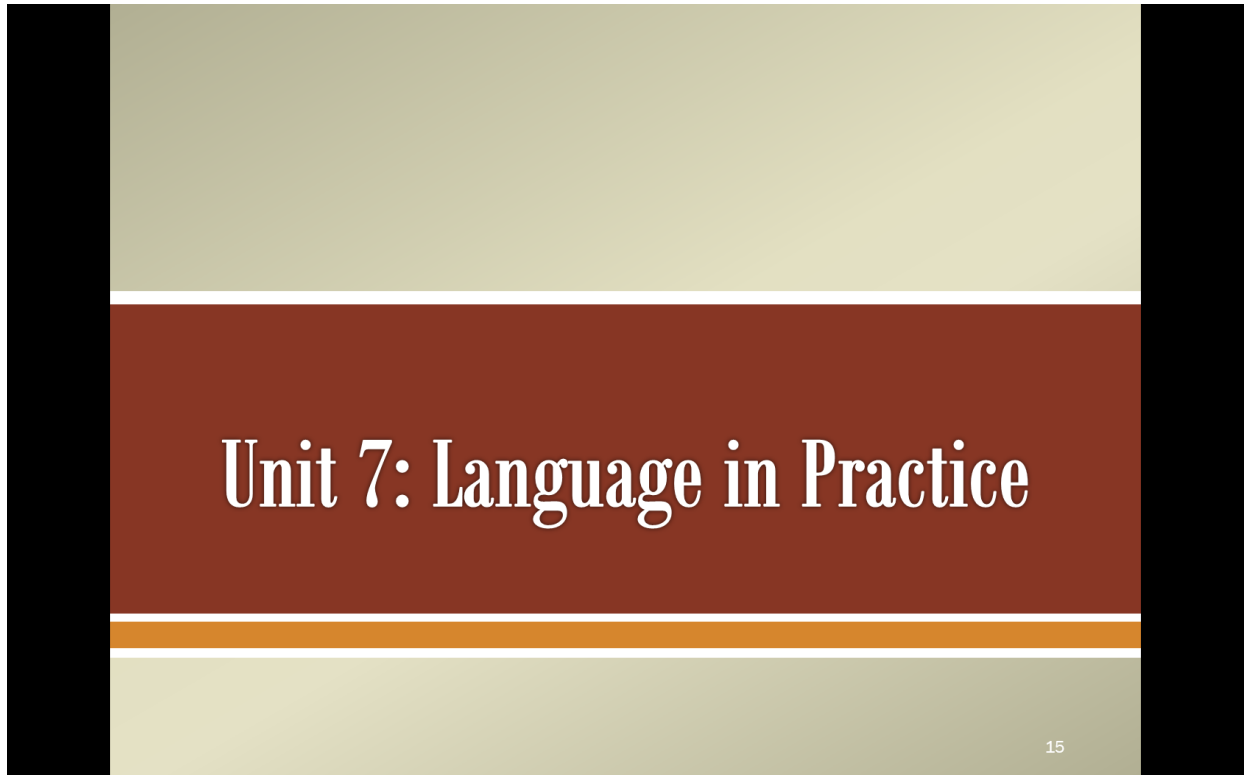
Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present the purpose of this unit to participants:

    In this section, we will discuss language that can create an affirming space for all youth. Language is powerful. Our words can either help or harm rapport-building.

2. **Learning Objective:** This unit will increase our skills in using language to impact our work with LGBTQ Youth.

Booster: Making an Impact with Language

Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present the slide and explain the following:
2. *These are best practice tips to be used with all youth regardless of known LGBTQ identity, so that these tips become standard practice for interactions with all youth:*
    -   *Use inclusive language, such as "partner(s)" or "significant other(s)"*
        -   *Instead of asking about a girlfriend, say, "Do you have a partner?" or "Is there someone special in your life?"*
    -   *Reflect client's language and terminology, self-definition is key.*
        -   *If the youth wants to be referred to as transgender in relation to their gender identity, then refer to the youth as transgender.*
    -   *Ask questions to avoid assumptions; be gentle and respectful.*
        -   *How do you identify? What are your gender pronouns, so that I may respect your identity?*
    -   *Practice, practice, practice!*
    -   *Practice asking these questions and using gender identity, sexual orientation and gender expression terminology with colleagues.*

Making an Impact with Language (cont'd)

Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Gender pronouns can be referred to as asserted gender pronoun
   a. You may also hear the phrase "Preferred Gender Pronoun" or "PGP." It is important to keep in mind that an individual's personal experience of their gender is not a "choice." The use of "Preferred Gender Pronoun" may leave a person feeling like you do not respect their gender experience as genuine or valid.
2. There are many gender pronouns in use today. It is best practice to allow a youth to self-define. Gender Pronouns are unique to each individual and thus should be treated with respect and care. Misgendering a person can cause great harm to a person.
3. Misgender means to refer to another person as a gender they do not identify with. This could be done intentionally to cause emotional and psychological harm or unintentionally because of assumptions.
4. Misgendering could damage to the relationship you have with a youth, which could ultimately damage their permanency options.

Activity/ Discussion: Gender Pronoun Activity
Function: Practice Using Asserted Gender Pronouns

RISE — **Gender Pronoun Activity**

Let's go around the room and say our names and gender pronouns (GPs).
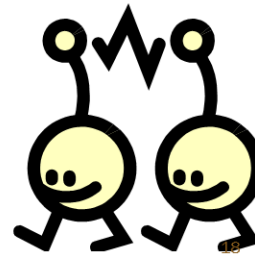
Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

Key Points/Action Steps:
Inform participants that this activity will help participants practice using gender pronouns (or GPs).

1. Present "Using GPs" activity directions and facilitate the activity:
2. Inform participants that this activity will give them practice using gender pronouns (or GPs).
3. Trainer can choose how to run the activity. Trainer can say, *"Let's go around the room and say your name, gender pronoun (or GPS) and one word to describe a value you bring into this work."*

Activity/ Discussion: Using Affirming Language
Function: Practice asking youth about their gender pronoun in foster care settings.

Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Inform participants that this activity will help them practice using gender pronouns (GPs) with youth in their care.
2. Ask participants to work in dyads or small-groups and read the "Now Try This" slide.

Suggested Tips:
1. *Staff members can introduce themselves and state their own personal gender pronouns, then they can ask for the young person's name and gender pronouns.*
2. *Build rapport by learning about the youth's hobbies, interests, etc. When appropriate, ask Alex, "I want to respect you. How do you want me to refer to you?"*
3. *Don't make assumptions, so avoid using gender pronouns or questions until Alex has self-identified to you.*
4. *Inform the youth where all restrooms are located, including gender neutral restrooms, if available.*

My Next Steps
Function: Reflect upon feelings and thoughts regarding the unit content and activities.

Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Introduce My Next Steps worksheet and ask participants to answer the question under the appropriate section on their handouts.
2. Social work practice is all about putting knowledge into action. Encourage participants to consider what they might do differently as a result of what they learned in this unit.
3. When participants are finished, request that a few people share their answers.

Unit 8: Rejection/Acceptance in Practice

Purpose statement: The purpose of this unit is to investigate and identify supports related to the coming-out process for both a youth and the youth's environment.

Learning Objectives:
Identify supports for a youth's coming-out process and the environment's adjustment process

Materials Needed:
- ☐ Unit 8 Slides
- ☐ Assessing Safety and Well-being for LGBTQ Youth
- ☐ My Next Steps

Unit Structure:
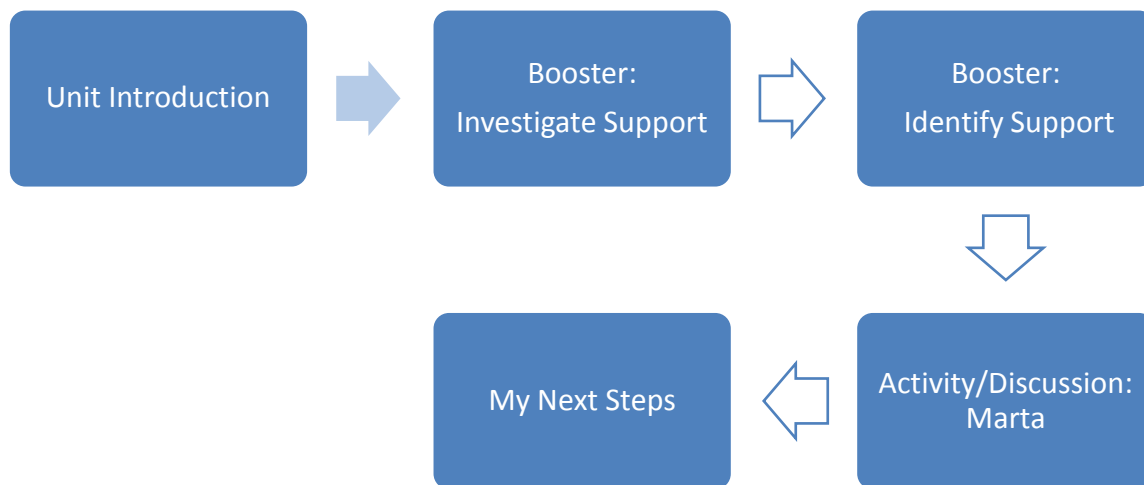
Unit Introduction → Booster: Investigate Support → Booster: Identify Support → Activity/Discussion: Marta → My Next Steps

Unit Duration:

Unit Introduction
Function: Present the Unit Purpose.

Unit 8:
Rejection/Acceptance in Practice

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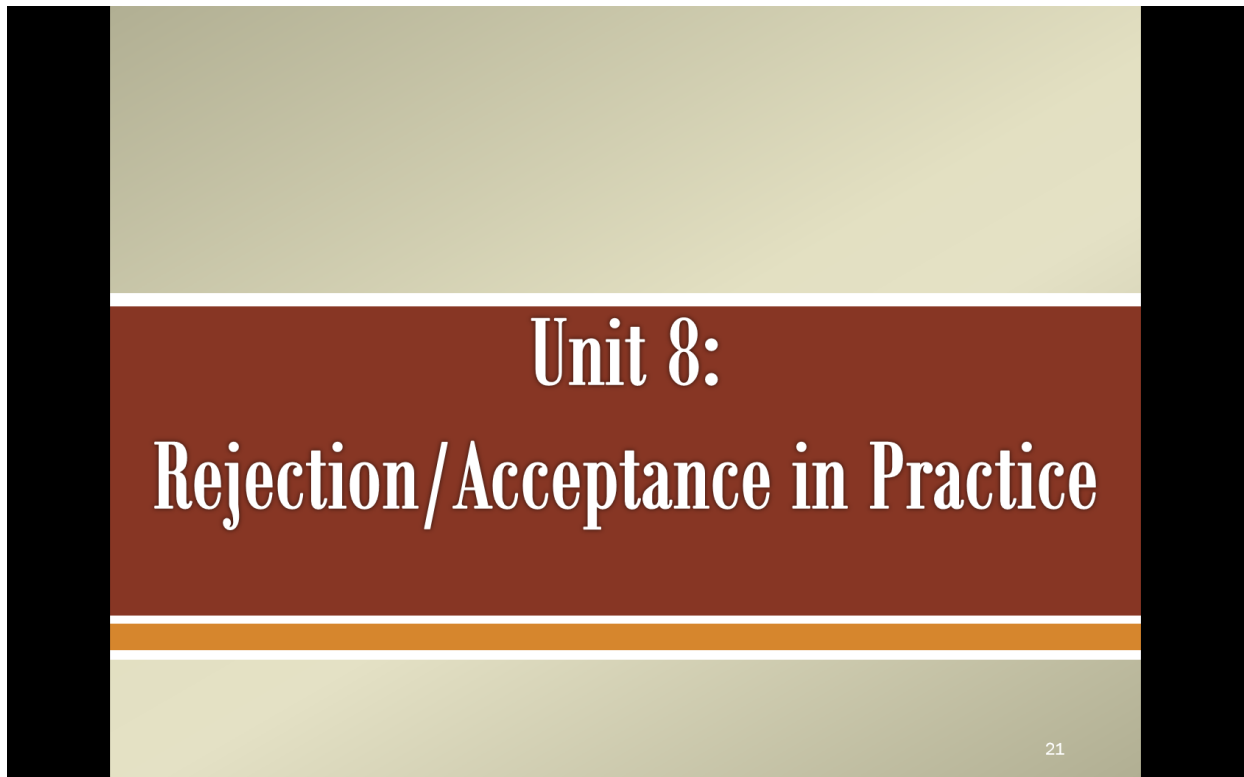
Key Points/ Action Steps:

1. Present the purpose of this unit:
   What should you do when a youth comes out to you? This unit will explain the appropriate steps to take to ensure youth are safe and supported.

2. **Learning Objectives:** Identify supports for a youth's coming-out process and the environment's adjustment

Booster: Investigating Support

Function: Increase knowledge of aspects to consider while investigating support for LGBTQ youth and their families.

iRISE
A PROJECT OF THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER

Assessing Safety and Well-being

Find out the following:

• What is the youth experiencing in their coming-out process?
   • Do they need support?
   • Do they feel safe?
   • What are the challenges?

Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Remind participants of the definition to coming out. Coming out is the process of acknowledging your sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression to yourself and then to others. This is a lifelong process.
2. Assist the youth in thinking about their experiences while coming out. Assess who they would like to come out to, the risks and benefits of coming out to certain people, and asses any possible safety concerns.
3. Distribute and explain the "Assessing Safety and Well-being for LGBTQ Youth" handout.
4. If a youth does not feel safe coming out to their social worker, or if the social worker fails to help a youth who is coming out, the youth's permanency could be hindered.

Booster: Investigate Support (cont'd)

iRISE — Assess the Environment: Is it Safe?

- **Best practice tip:**
  - **Ask for PERMISSION from the youth.**

- **Identify the core issue:**
  - **Is this about LGBTQ-identity or something else?**

- **Assess accepting and rejecting behaviors:**
  - *Extremely rejecting*
  - *Moderately rejecting*

Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present slide.
2. Provide examples for the participants.
   a. Remind participants of rejection, acceptance, and the findings from the "Supportive Families, Healthy Children" pamphlet.
   b. *Is the problem an LGBTQ issue or something else?*
      i. *A mother says to her transgender foster daughter "you can't wear that dress to school." The foster youth calls the case worker to complain. It turns out the mother supports the youth's gender expression, but has a rule in her house that dresses cannot go above the knee, no exceptions. In this particular case, the youth's dress was inappropriate, according to the house rules. This is an issue about the appropriateness of the dress, not an attempt to reject the youth's gender expression."*
   c. *Is the environment extremely rejecting?*
      i. *Is the youth experiencing violence in the home or verbal harassment?*
   d. *Is the environment moderately rejecting?*
      i. *Is the youth receiving mixed messages such as "I love you but I don't think you should come to the holiday dinner because people will talk?"*

Booster: Identify support
Function: Increase knowledge relates to assessing how the environment might need support.

How to Support Relatives and Caregivers

- **Acknowledge their process & express empathy for grief and loss**

- **Provide education to dispel myths and stereotypes**

- **Recommend spaces that encourage expression of feelings (i.e. support groups)**

- **Remind them that their behaviors can seriously impact the youth's health and well-being.**

Adapted from: National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care

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Key Points/Action Steps:

Inform participants that families and caregivers experience adjustment processes when a youth comes out. To determine their needs:

1. Acknowledge their process and express empathy for their grief and loss.
   a. Emphasize the developmental milestones of the youth's healthy growth and well-being.
2. Provide educational support to dispel myths and stereotypes.
   a. Reiterate findings from "Supportive Families, Healthy Children" pamphlet.
   b. Recommend spaces that encourage expression of feelings
      i. PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
      ii. TYFA (TransYouth Family Allies)
      iii. Supportive clergy, priests, pastors, etc.
      iv. Los Angeles LGBT Center
3. Identify whether the source of discomfort is the youth's LGBTQ identity, gender variance, or something else altogether.
   a. Correct misinformation.
4. Remind them of the "Supportive Families, Healthy Children" pamphlet, and that families' behaviors can significantly impact the youths' health and well-being.

Activity/ Discussion: Practice Assessing the Environment
Function: Practice investigating and identifying the needs of youth and the environment as it relates to the coming-out process.

RISE
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Practice Assessing the Environment

Marta, a teenager, has lived with the Stevenson foster family since infancy. She has recently come-out as bisexual. She wants to have her girlfriend come to the house to visit. Ms. Stevenson opposes this. Marta's foster sister was able to bring her boyfriend to dinner the month before. Marta calls her caseworker to complain. What should the caseworker do?

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Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Present the scenario of Marta and ask the participants to work in small groups and discuss the scenario.
2. Ask for a large group share-out and facilitate the group discussion that ties back to the main content.

Important things to point out:
1. Ask Marta's permission to intervene.
2. Use OARS skills from motivational interviewing to identify the core issues. For example, is this about Marta being in a same-sex relationship or is Marta's girlfriend a bad influence? Marta may be grounded from skipping school and is not allowed to have any friends over. Find out the core issue.
3. Ask Marta for more information and affirm Marta's identity.
4. Understand that her foster parents may be experiencing grief and loss following Marta's coming out.
5. Do not immediately remove Marta without exploring the deeper issues.
6. Ask parents why they are not allowing Marta's girlfriend to come over for dinner.
7. Correct any misinformation the parents may have and offer them support.
8. If the parent(s) express anti-gay bias and are not willing to consider accepting Marta, then this may not be a safe home for Marta.
9. Inform the parents of their legal responsibility to provide non-discriminatory care.

10. Talk to the parents about having rules that apply the same way for all youth, not just for LGBTQ or non-LGBTQ youth.

My Next Steps
Function: Process/reflect upon feelings and thoughts regarding the unit content and activities.

Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Introduce My Next Steps worksheet and ask participants to answer the question under the appropriate section on their handouts.
2. Social work practice is all about putting knowledge into action. Encourage participants to consider what they might do differently as a result of what they learned in this unit.
3. When participants are finished, request that a few people share their answers.

Unit 9: Affirming Environments in Practice

Purpose statement: The purpose of this unit is to build and practice skills that assist in adopting an affirming environment for LGBTQ Youth.

Learning Objectives:
- Recognize behavior that truly creates an affirming environment.
- Respond to supportive and negative comments and questions.

Materials Needed:
- ☐ Unit 9 Slides
- ☐ My Next Steps

Unit Structure:

```
Unit Introduction  →  Booster: Adopting affirming behaviors  ⇒  Activity/ Discussion: Practicing Intervening and Educating
                                                                          ⇓
My Next Steps  ←  Booster: RISE Up for LGBTQ Youth  ←  Activity/Discussion: Practice Intervening and Advocating
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Unit Duration:

Unit Introduction
Function: Present Unit Purpose.
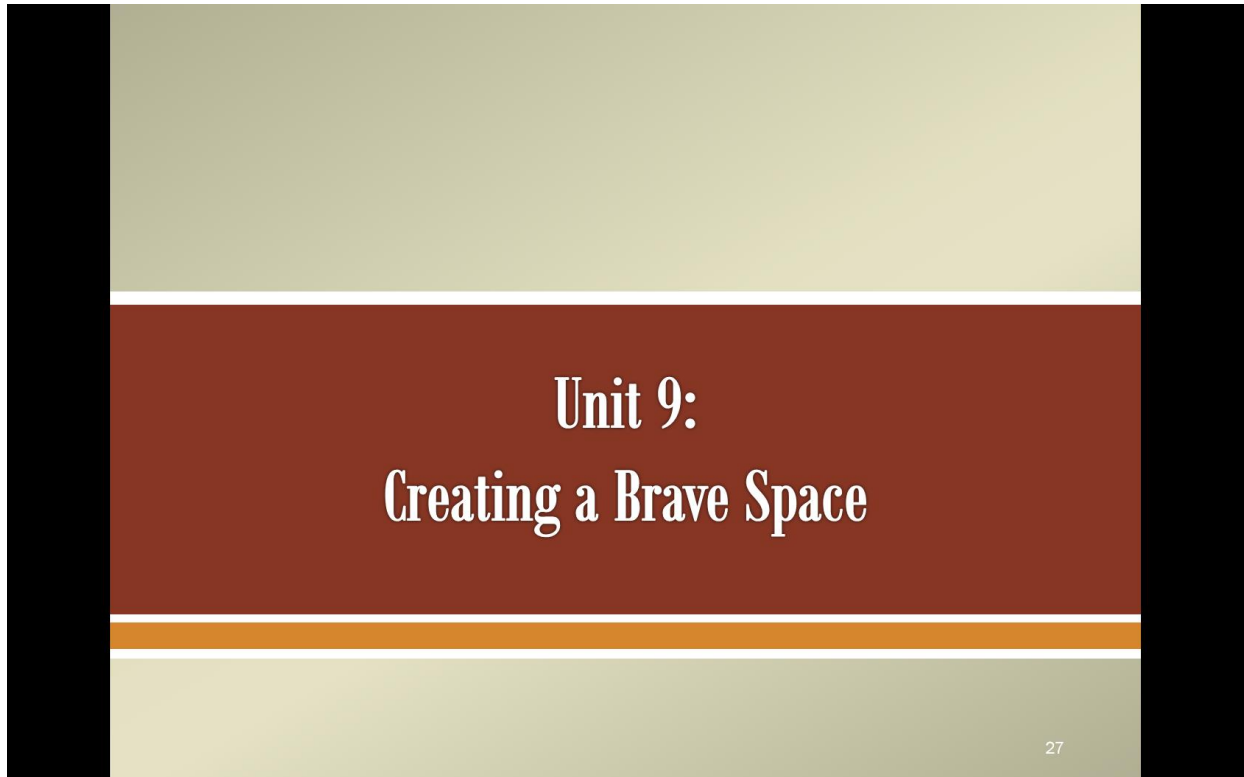
Key Points/ Action Steps:

1. Present the purpose of the unit to participants.
   Environmental cues alone do not create Brave spaces; our actions must also be affirming. In this unit, we will learn how to educate and intervene in order to maintain a safe and inclusive space for all youth.
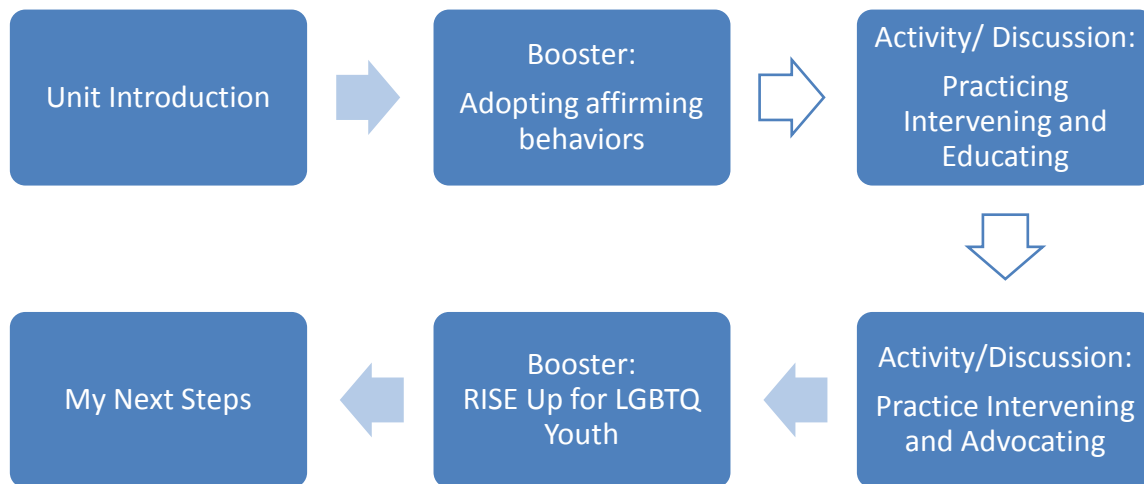
2. **Learning Objectives:**
- Recognize behavior that truly creates an affirming environment.
- Respond to supportive and negative comments and questions.

Booster: Adopting Affirming Behaviors
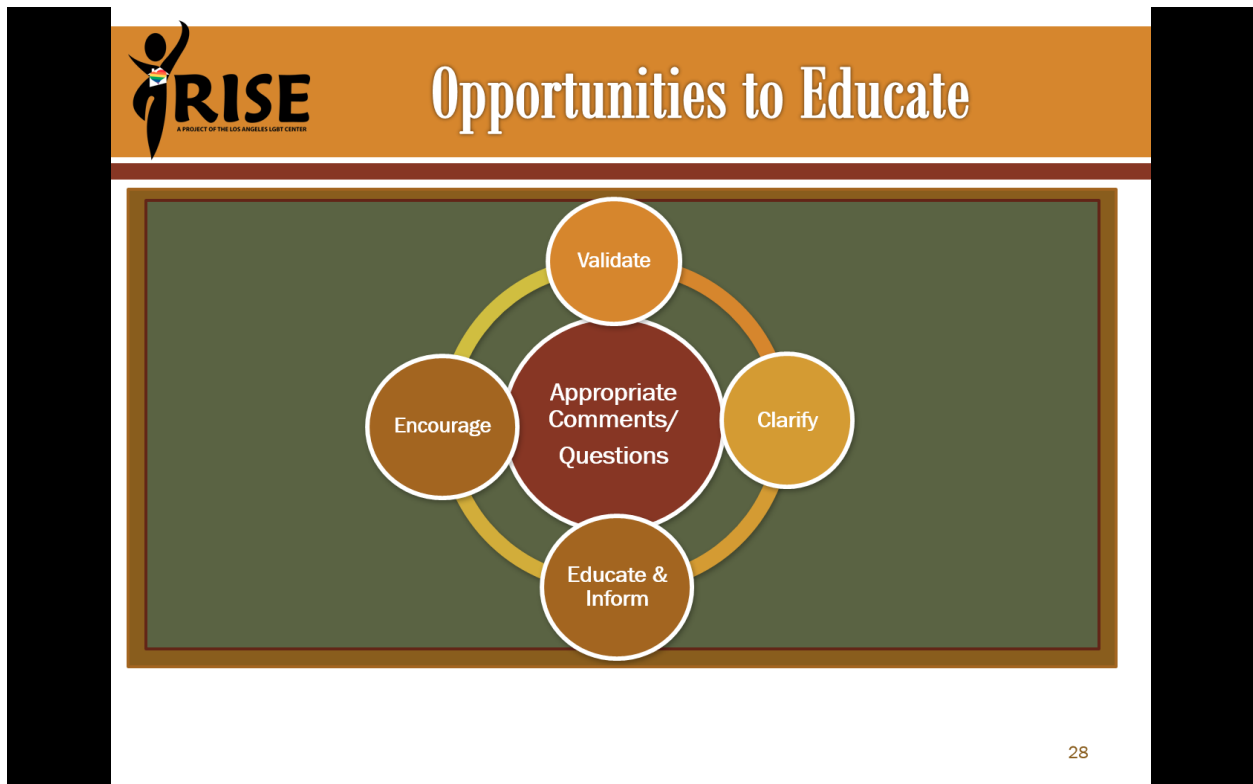
Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present slide
2. Note: Questions and comments should be viewed as opportunities to educate.
3. Inform the individual that affirming comments can help create affirming environments and encourage positive statements.
4. If it is a question or positive statement, respond in the following way:
   a. *Validate the individual's question and acknowledge their effort to be informed.*
   b. *Clarify what it is they are asking about.*
   c. *Educate and inform them to the best of your ability.*
   d. *Encourage them to ask more questions and continue seeking information.*

Examples of questions*:*

1. *I noticed Angela, who identifies as transgender, is allowed to have her own room. Why can't I have my own room too?*
2. *Why do we have these new rainbow posters in our cottage?*

Activity/ Discussion: Practice Intervening and Educating
Function: Participants practice responding to negative and questioning/supportive statements regarding attraction and/or gender diversity.
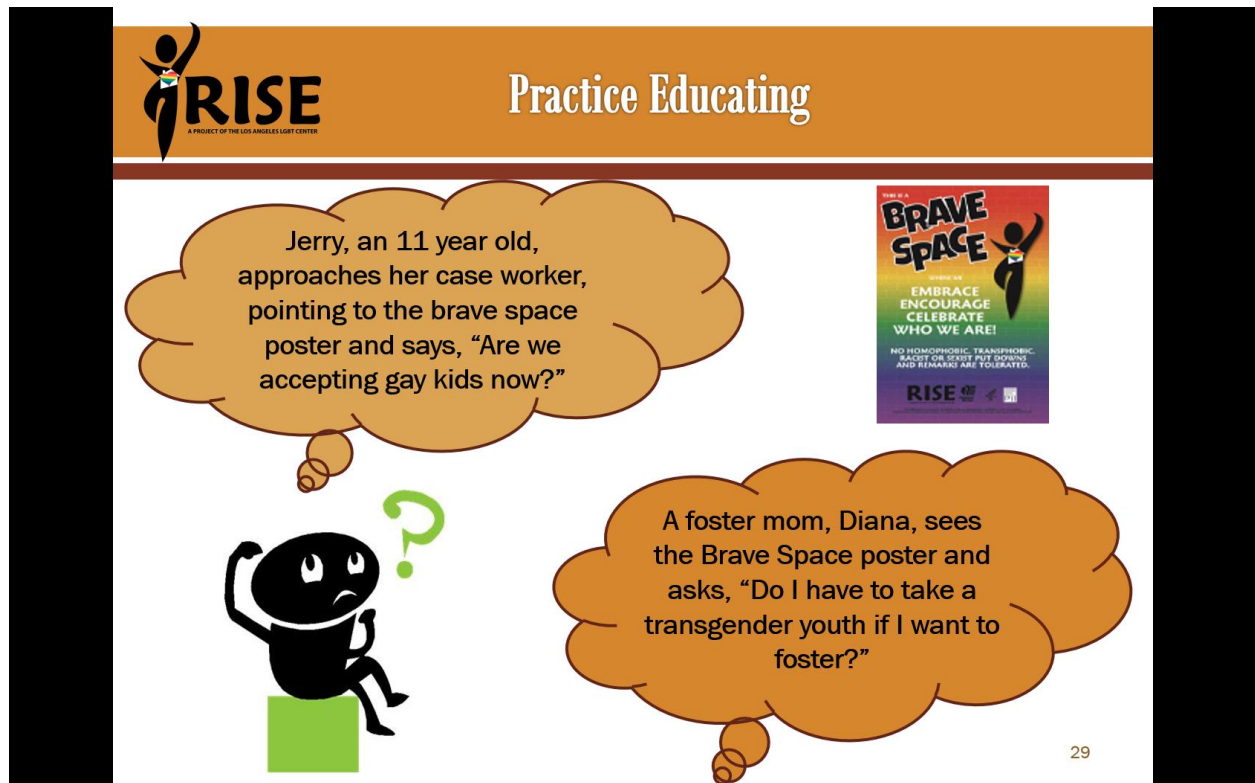
Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Inform participants that this activity will help them practice responding to questions and comments in order to create more affirming environments for youth.
2. Ask participants to work in dyads or small-groups and read the slide.
3. In a large group share-out, ask participants to share how they experienced the activity.

Important Points:
Jerry:
1. Validate Jerry for asking the question by saying something like, "Thanks for that question, Jerry."
2. Identify the core issue for Jerry. Clarify what Jerry means by the term "gay."
3. Educate Jerry on the Brave Space poster and why it is important that we respect all youth.
4. Inform Jerry that we accept all youth.
5. If there is anti-gay bias, educate Jerry and let Jerry know that bias will not be tolerated.
6. Talk to anyone who may have heard Jerry's comment so that everyone knows it is an affirming space.
7. Encourage Jerry to keep asking questions.

Diana:
1. Validate Diana by saying, "I'm really glad you asked that question, Diana."
2. Clarify what Diana's concerns are and why she asked the question.

3. Probe to see if there are inherent biases at play or if there is another core issue.
4. Inform her of the significance of the poster to LGBTQ youth and about the issues that this population faces in care (e.g. rejection, abuse, difficulty finding families who support them, etc.)
5. Educate Diana on what LGBTQ means and correct any misinformation.
6. If there is bias and Diana cannot support LGBTQ youth, do not place any youth in her care. We never know someone's identity until they tell us and she may not be able to provide a safe environment to all youth.
7. Inform Diana that there are no requirements, but also no guarantees that a youth placed in her home will not be LGBTQ.
8. Encourage Diana to continue asking questions.

Booster: Adopting Affirming Behaviors
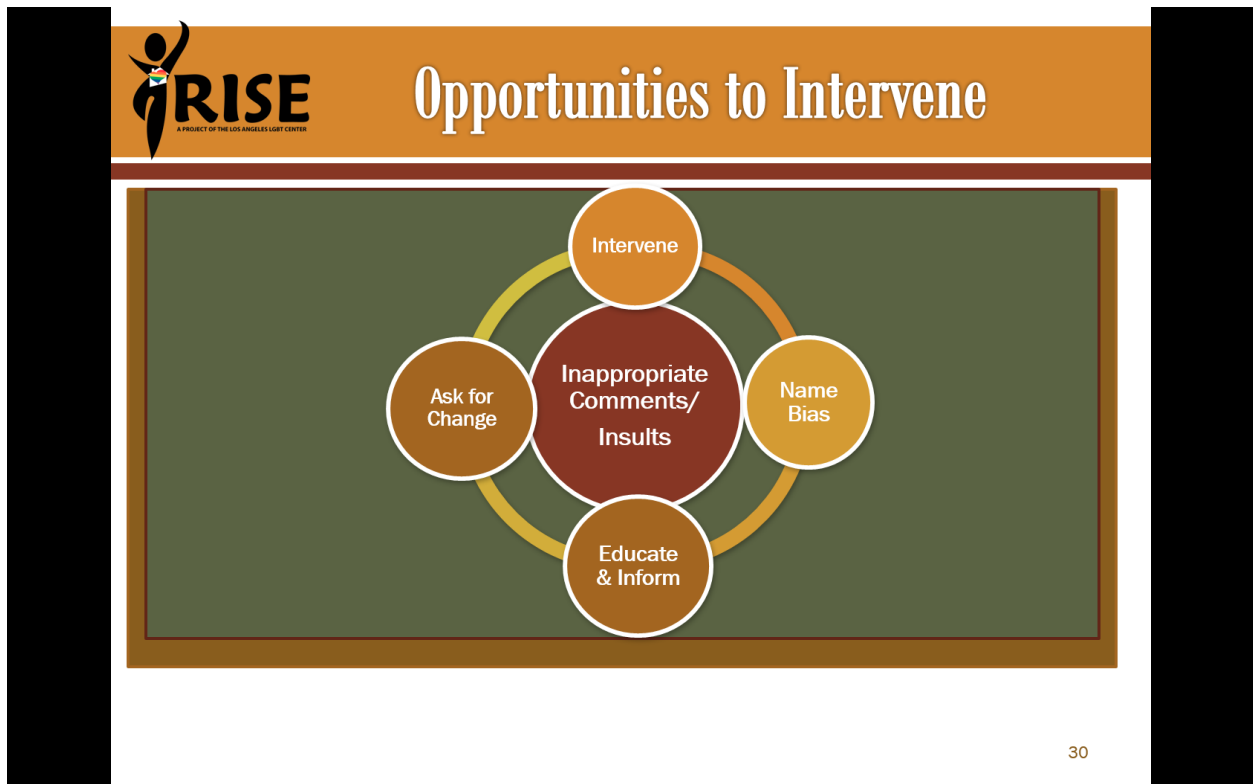
Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Present slide
2. Assess: How do you know if someone is making a negative statement?
   a. *Pay attention to their tone and the context. Does it sound like there is some bias or negativity within the comment? Inform the individual of your observation.*
3. How to respond to negative statements*:*
   a. *Intervene when you witness negative behavior or comments.*
   b. *Immediately name the bias and describe the harm.*
   c. *Educate and inform the commenter to the best of your ability.*
   d. *On behalf of the entire organization, ask for change.*
   e. *Talk to individuals in the environment who may have overheard the negative statement so that they are aware of the bias and remind them that it is an affirming space.*
   f. *If available, reference the Brave Space poster as a resource that establishes what the space is about and not about.*

Examples of harmful comments:
1. *Dudes don't wear dresses! You're a freak.*
2. *The zoo is so gay. I'd rather go to a concert.*

Inform participants that environmental cues alone do no create affirming spaces. Our behaviors must support and reinforce the environmental cues we use. The Brave Space poster is a powerful symbol of affirmation. However, if our behaviors do not align with its messages then we create a situation in which

youth may believe they are safe when, in reality, they are not. It is essential to consistently address harmful comments and ill-intentioned questions when creating and maintaining an affirming space.

Activity/ Discussion: Practice Intervening and Advocating

Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Ask participants to work in dyads or small-groups to discuss and propose affirming actions which address the scenario.
2. Facilitate a large group share-out.

Important points:
1. Intervene immediately by complimenting Lena's hair and by supporting her gender expression.
2. Later, in a private setting, inform the house manager that it is not appropriate to insult or judge a youth's gender expression.
3. Point out the house manager's statement is biased (heterosexist bias or anti-transgender bias).
4. Explain why the comment could be harmful to the youth: Comments like this create unsafe environments where LGBTQ and gender-variant youth are unable to thrive. Expectations about gender expression that are based on stereotypes can be harmful. It is important to allow youth to self-define and express their gender however they feel comfortable.
5. Talk to anyone else who may have overheard the house manager's comment to reassure people that someone is responsive and advocating for Lena.
6. Ask for change from the house manager.

Inform participants that intervening and responding to negative comments is an affirming behavior. Interventions let youth know that they are safe in your care and that you enforce the message behind the Brave Space poster (and other non-discrimination policies).

Function: Practice adopting affirming behaviors in caregiving settings.

Booster: What do affirming behaviors look like in caregiving settings?
Function: Increase participants' understanding of actions practitioners can take to show support.

What do affirming behaviors look like in caregiving settings?

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Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Present slide and ask participants for their ideas to support LGBTQ youth.
2. Recall the discussion in the Foundations curriculum around rejecting behaviors in caregiving settings. At this point, we will discuss what affirming behaviors look like in caregiving settings.
3. Some affirming behaviors might include:
   - *"Educate yourself and your co-workers."*
   - *"Use gender-neutral language when discussing dating."*
   - *"Increase your comfort in using LGBTQ terms."*
   - *"Have visible LGBTQ resources in your office or agency and utilize tools for creating affirming spaces."*
   - *"Acknowledge and address coming out issues with youth."*
   - *"Be non-judgmental."*
   - *"Intervene when you witness LGBTQ peer harassment and violence."*
   - *"Don't make assumptions."*
   - *"Talk with youth about their LGBTQ identities."*
   - *"Express affection when you learn that a child is LGBTQ."*
   - *"Advocate for a youth when s/he is mistreated because of his/her LGBTQ identity."*
   - *"Welcome a youth's LGBTQ friends/partners."*
   - *"Support every youth's gender identity and gender expression."*
   - *"Connect youth, families and staff to LGBTQ resources (role models, organizations, events, etc.)"*
   - *Use the youth's gender pronoun, name, and form of address that they are comfortable with.*

My Next Steps
Function: Process/reflect upon feelings and thoughts regarding the unit content and activities.

Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Introduce My Next Steps worksheet and ask participants to answer the question under the appropriate section on their handouts.
2. Social work practice is all about putting knowledge into action. Encourage participants to consider what they might do differently as a result of what they learned in this unit.
3. When participants are finished, request that a few people share their answers.

Unit 10: Legal Framework and Professional Standards in Practice

Purpose statement: The purpose of this unit is to use the legal framework and professional standards when managing information in order to meet safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes.
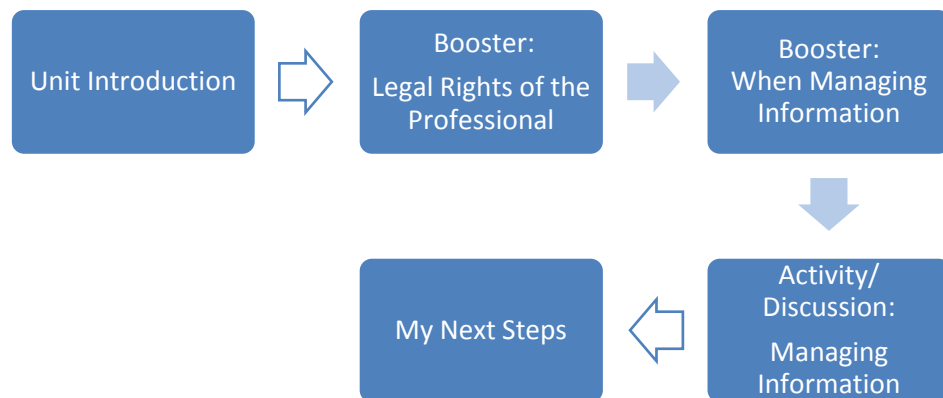
Learning Objectives:
Identify assets and challenges in managing disclosures regarding attraction and/or gender diversity

Materials Needed:
- ☐ Unit 11 Slides
- ☐ My Next Steps

Unit Structure:

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┌──────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐
│                  │        │    Booster:      │        │    Booster:      │
│ Unit Introduction│  ⇨     │ Legal Rights of  │  ⇨     │  When Managing   │
│                  │        │  the Professional│        │   Information    │
└──────────────────┘        └──────────────────┘        └──────────────────┘
                                                                 ⇩
┌──────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐
│                  │        │    Activity/     │
│  My Next Steps   │  ⇦     │   Discussion:    │
│                  │        │    Managing      │
└──────────────────┘        │   Information    │
                            └──────────────────┘
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Unit Duration:

Unit Introduction
Function: Present the unit purpose.

Key Points/ Action Steps:
1. Present the purpose of this unit to the participants.
   The purpose of this unit is to use the legal framework and professional standards in order to positively impact a youth's safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes.

2. **Learning Objectives**: Identify assets and challenges in managing disclosures regarding attraction and/or gender diversity

Booster and Discussion: Legal Rights of the Professional
Function: Increase participant understanding of youth rights and professional standards in providing fair and equal treatment to all youth, LGBTQ or not.
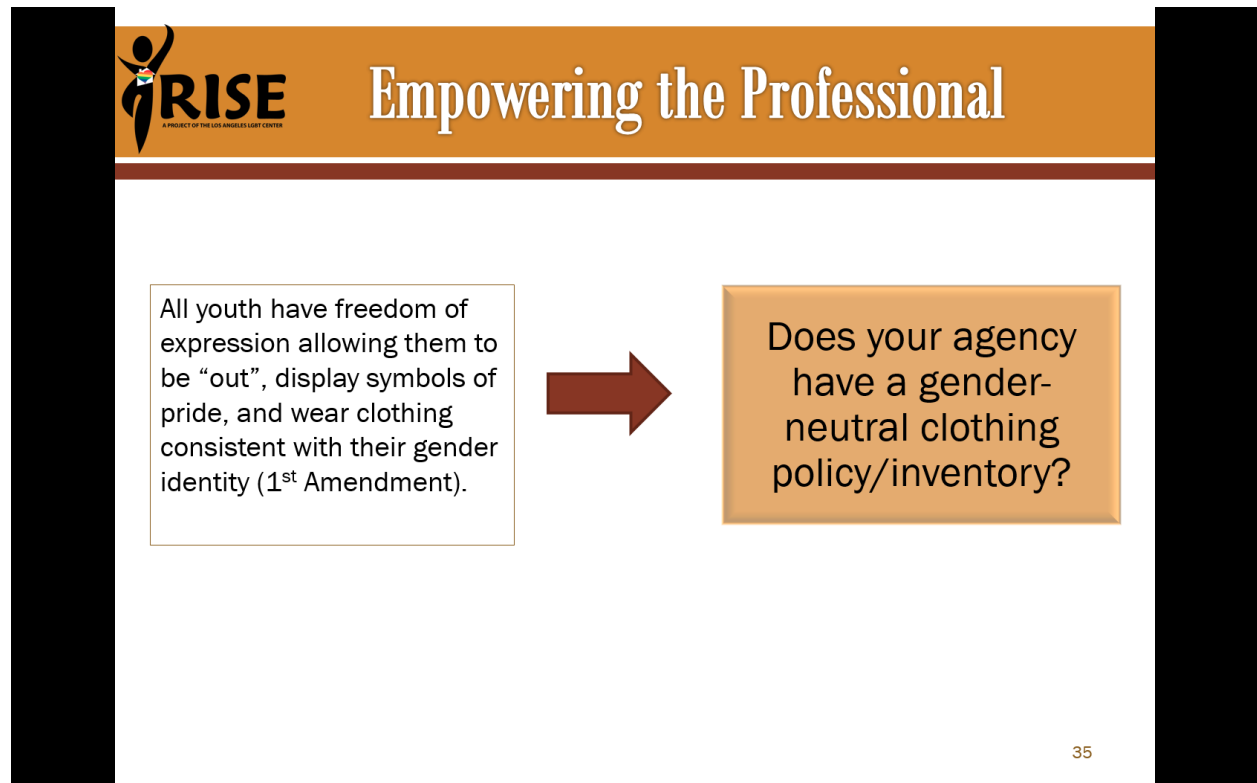
Key Points/Action Steps:
1) Provide an explanation of the youth's rights.
1st Amendment allowing freedom of speech and expression
The 1st Amendment limits the right of public systems to censor a young person's speech or expression allowing for the right of a youth to be "out", display symbols of pride, and wear clothing consistent with their gender identity. The 1st Amendment also gives youth the right to be free of religious indoctrination.

3. Present the questions to participants and ask them to discuss in large or small groups.
4. Emphasize the importance of looking into agency policies and ensuring that they align with federal and state laws.
5. Provide examples of why each question is essential to protecting the rights of LGBTQ youth in care.
    a. *Gender-neutral clothing policies/inventories are essential to protect the youth's Constitutional right to freedom of expression. Such policies/inventories allow all youth to purchase clothing and express their gender however they wish.*
        i. *Prompt questions to guide discussion: Are biological boys allowed to wear feminine clothing in your facility? Are biological girls allowed to wear masculine clothing in your facility? Does your agency have a different clothing inventory for "boys" and for "girls"?*

Booster and Discussion: Legal Rights of the Professional
Function: Increase participant understanding of youth rights and professional standards in providing fair and equal treatment to all youth, LGBTQ or not.

Key Points/Action Steps:
1) Provide an explanation of the youth's rights.
AB 458 Adds to rights of foster children
*"It is the policy of the state that all children in foster care shall have the right to have **fair and equal access** to all available services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits, and to **not be subjected to discrimination or harassment** on the **basis of actual or perceived** race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, **sexual orientation, gender identity**, physical or mental disability, or HIV status." Cal. Welfare & Inst. Code § 16001.9(a)(22)*

6. Present the questions to participants and ask them to discuss in large or small groups.
7. Emphasize the importance of looking into agency policies and ensuring that they align with federal and state laws.
8. Provide examples of why each question is essential to protecting the rights of LGBTQ youth in care.
    a. *It is essential to know how to recognize and report discriminatory care. LGBTQ youth have the right to non-discriminatory care according to AB 458.*
        i. *Who would you report discriminatory behavior to? Answers might include:*
            1. *Supervisor*
            2. *House Manager*
            3. *Regional Administrator*
            4. *Human Resources*
            5. *Community Care Licensing*

> 6. *The Department of Children Family Services*
> 7. *Ombudsman (hotline for youth)*
> 8. *Help/hotlines*

b. In upholding your professional standards of practice, you are expected to advocate for LGBTQ youth when you see violations of their rights.

Booster and Discussion: Legal Rights of the Professional
Function: Increase participant understanding of professional's rights and professional standards in providing fair and equal treatment to all youth, LGBTQ or not.

Key Points/Action Steps:
1) Provide an explanation of the professional's rights.
AB 458 Adds to rights of providers:
 "It is the policy of the state that all persons engaged in providing care and services to foster children shall have **fair and equal access** to all available programs, benefits, services, and licensing processes, and shall **not be subjected to discrimination or harassment** on the basis of their **clients or their own, actual or perceived** race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, **sexual orientation, gender identity**, mental or physical disability, or HIV status." Cal. Welfare & Inst. Code § 16013(a)
2. Present the questions to participants and ask them to discuss in large or small groups.
3. Emphasize the importance of looking into agency policies and ensuring that they align with federal and state laws.

Booster: When Managing Information

Function: Increase participants' understanding of the guiding principles that should be respected when managing information regarding a youth's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression.

Guiding Principles when Managing Information

Guiding Principles

✓ Disclosing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity without their permission can be harmful.

✓ Gathering information is a continuous process.

✓ Ensure that the information comes directly from the youth.

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Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Present the different guiding principles of managing information regarding a youth's sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
2. Emphasize the importance of youth-driven decisions.
3. Explain why each principle is crucial to strengthening the youth's permanency options.
    a. *Youth permission is key when managing information. Ask the youth if they want the information recorded and have a conversation with them about the benefits and risks of recording it. When having this conversation, the youth might inform you about safety risks associated with sharing the information. Consider the age of the youth when having these conversations, and consider the context of each situation.*
    b. *Gathering information is a continuous process. This process happens over the course of a lifetime, and the information could change over time.*
    c. *Ensure that information is coming directly from the youth. That is the only way to ensure you have the most accurate information. Be aware that information documented on the youth's record may not be accurate.*

Activity/ Discussion: Managing Information Discussion
Function: Provide participants an opportunity to practice managing information.

Key points/ Action Steps:
1. Introduce the activity and then ask the participants to discuss the question in small groups. Allot enough time for the conversation.
2. Ask participants for share-outs about the discussion prompt.
3. When necessary, use the following prompts to guide the large group discussion.
    a. When you are collecting this information, what are some important guidelines to remember?
    b. If you had to record this information, what considerations should you take?
    c. What steps would you take when disclosing this information to a third party?
    d. How can your agency support this process?
4. Use participant responses to highlight the important aspects of collecting information, recording information, disclosing information and institutionalizing practice.

Option to present:
Consider why the foster father is telling you this? Are they searching for help? Is the youth in danger? Try and measure the level of rejection and acceptance that may be present.

Consider how the foster father got this information. What does he mean by "gay"?

Did the foster father have the youth's permission to share this information with you? If so, can you approach the youth to provide support? If not, consider how you can have conversations with the youth about their family dynamics as a backdoor approach.

When recording the information, only record information that is essential. If you have to record it, record the father's statements, and note that the information was not confirmed by the youth.

Booster: How will you RISE up for LGBTQ Youth?
Function: Increase participants' understanding of actions practitioners can take to show support.

RISE **How will you RISE up for LGBTQ Youth?**
A PROJECT OF THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER

Recognize LGBTQ and gender variant children and youth are in your care and caseload.

Intervene to reduce barriers.

Support children and youth.

Empower yourself and co-workers.

Adapted from: "Creating Inclusive Systems of Care for LGBT Youth   39

Key Points/Action Steps:

1. Ask participants what they plan to do to RISE (Recognize, Intervene, Support, and Empower) up for LGBTQ youth in their care.
2. *Some ideas on ways in which to show support*
   - *"Recognize that LGBTQ youth are in our care."*
   - *"Educate yourself and your co-workers."*
   - *"Use gender-neutral language when discussing dating."*
   - *"Increase your comfort in using LGBTQ terms."*
   - *"Have visible LGBTQ resources in your office or agency and utilize tools for creating affirming spaces."*
   - *"Acknowledge and address coming out issues with youth."*
   - *"Be non-judgmental."*
   - *"Intervene when you witness LGBTQ peer harassment and violence."*
   - *"Don't make assumptions."*
   - *"Talk with youth about their LGBTQ identities."*
   - *"Express affection when you learn that a child is LGBTQ."*
   - *"Advocate for a youth when s/he is mistreated because of his/her LGBTQ identity."*
   - *"Welcome a youth's LGBTQ friends/partners."*
   - *"Support every youth's gender identity and gender expression."*

- *"Connect youth, families and staff to LGBTQ resources (role models, organizations, events, etc.)"*

Use the youth's gender pronoun, name, and form of address that they are comfortable with.

Closing
Function: Closeout training.

Works Cited

- Jacobs, J., Marksamer, J., Reyes, C., & Wilber, S. (2007). Creating Inclusive Systems of Care for LGBT Youth-OHYAC training.
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- Child Welfare League of America & Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. (2006). Out of the Margins: A report on the regional listening forums highlighting the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth in care.
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- National Association of Social Workers and Lambda Legal. (2009). Moving the margins: Training Curriculum for child welfare services with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth in out-of-home care
- Guidelines for Managing Information Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression of Child Welfare Systems, Putting Pride Into Practice Project, Family Builders by Adoption, Oakland, CA.

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Key Points/Action Steps:
1. Answer any remaining question(s).
2. Inform participants about the RISE Coaching Network.
3. Reference and acknowledge contributions made by the individuals and/or organizations in the "Works Cited" slide.